

Local Place Plan Update – February 2026

(as circulated to a range of community councils and other community bodies in Highland by email)

Welcome to this, our latest Update for those community bodies preparing, or who may be interested in preparing, [Local Place Plans](#) in Highland. It has been a while since our last Update and in the meantime community bodies around Highland and the Council have been busy with place planning at various levels, providing evidence and ideas to inform future planning.

Please note that The Highland Council intends to launch a replacement website soon. Whilst you will find its structure and look to be different from our current site, the link provided above should continue to give you access to Local Place Planning resources and the new website will provide an improved search function. After the launch we will fix any broken links in this Update and publish it on the new website so that you can directly access the relevant resources.

Update on timeline for the Highland Local Development Plan

In January 2026 we published our annual [Development Plans Newsletter](#) which gives an overview and update of the timetable for preparing land use planning documents for the Highland Council area. The newsletter lets you know how and when you can get involved in preparing these plans.

We have revised our timeline for the Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP), and now aim to:

- publish the Evidence Report by the end of Q1 2026-27, for Gate Check
- publish the Proposed Plan by the end of Q1 2027-28, for Public Consultation
- submit the Proposed Plan by the end of Q4 2027-28, for Examination
- adopt the Plan by the end of Q1 2029-30, for Delivery.

Why is this important for Local Place Plans?

Although Local Place Plans can be submitted by community bodies to The Highland Council at any time for validation checking and registration, many wish their Local Place Plan to be registered in time to be taken into account in the preparation of this next HLDP. Based on the revised timeline for the HLDP outlined above, we now advise that Local Place Plan submissions that:

- pass the validation checks and are registered no later than 30 April 2026 will be taken into account in the preparation of the HLDP Evidence Report
- pass the validation checks and are registered between May and September 2026 are likely to be taken into account in the preparation of this HLDP from the outset
- are validated and registered after September 2026 will be taken into account at the next available opportunity in the local development plan cycle which may include some consideration in the preparation of the HLDP Proposed Plan.

Local Place Plan progress in Highland

At the time of writing, 16 Local Place Plans have passed validation and are registered.

11 more Local Place Plans have been checked by us and our feedback is with the community bodies for them to make amendments required to enable registration. A further 8 Local Place Plans are currently with us, either as formal submissions or as drafts, for checking. As shown on our [Map of Local Place Plans](#), we are aware that there are a number of other community bodies preparing Local Place Plans but who have yet to reach the stage of sending them to us for checking, and we are working through questions about Local Place Plan requirements that we have received.

Please bear with us as we work through our Local Place Plan tasks alongside our other work on planning for Highland. The latest advice on timelines set out above provides more opportunity for these steps to be completed by community bodies and the Council as appropriate, in order for Local Place Plans to be registered and taken into account in the preparation of the new HLDP.

Local Place Plan templates

When we check a Local Place Plan submission for validation, we are checking that the legal requirements for Local Place Plans as set by Scottish Government have been met. We are also checking that other details have been done that allow us to publish Local Place Plans on the register on our website. We explain these legal requirements and other details in our [Local Place Plan Template Guidance](#). Please note, you do not have to use our [Local Place Plan templates](#), they are a guide that you may wish to follow to help ensure that your Local Place Plan meets the Government's legal requirements.

Other guidance and tools

We provide links to a wide range of [guidance and tools](#) for Local Place Planning on our website. The following are those we have most recently added.

- SCDC '[Local Place Plans – A guide for communities](#)' – The Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC), which is the national lead body for community development in Scotland, developed a guide containing useful information to help with Local Place Plan preparation, such as the differences between Local Place Plans and Community Action Plans and how to develop a consultant's brief when seeking support for Local Place Plan preparation. We are delighted that SCDC included hyperlinks to our [Local Place Plan Flowchart](#) and our [range of templates](#) in the [Help & Further info section](#) of their Local Place Plan guide for communities.
- Historic Environment Scotland [Talking About Heritage](#)
- CLS, KPC and WHCT guide to [Creating a Local Place Plan: By Communities For Communities](#)
- Place At The Table [Free-to-view training about what's involved in producing a Local Place Plan](#)
- The Highland Council [bilingual guide to the consideration of Gaelic in Local Place Plans](#).

Things for communities to check before submitting a Local Place Plan

We have collated some of the common causes for Local Place Plans not passing the validation checks below. **This is not the full list of legal requirements; for those, see our [Local Place Plan Template Guidance](#).**

Before you submit your Local Place Plan	✓
If you are a community-controlled body (not a community council), has your written constitution ¹ been checked by us against the requirements of Section 19 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and is the approved constitution lodged with Companies House as required by Section 26 of the Companies Act 2006 ? We recommend that this check is completed before you prepare your Local Place Plan.	
Is your Local Place Plan area wholly within your community body area ? We recommend that this check is completed before you prepare your Local Place Plan.	
Has your Local Place Plan had regard to all of the current Local Development Plans, Locality Plan(s), and National Planning Framework for your Local Place Plan area? ²	
Does your Local Place Plan contain a hyperlink to each document/source that your Local Place Plan has used for its preparation and do all of these hyperlinks work? For any document/source for which there is no hyperlink available, do you have a copy of the document/source that you can include in your submission?	
Has your statutory consultation^{3, 4} • included all the Councillors⁵ within your Local Place Plan area? • included all Community Councils within and adjoining your Local Place Plan area? • allowed respondents 28 days to respond from the day after the sent date? We recommend that, before you begin your statutory consultation, you contact us on lpp@highland.gov.uk to check for which Wards⁵ you need to consult the Councillors and to check which Community Councils you need to consult. We also recommend that you keep a copy of your Information Notices and covering emails/letters as evidence to submit to us with your Local Place Plan, to show that you have met the requirements.	

1: Your local [Third Sector Delivery Organisation](#) will be able to advise on group governance and any changes that may be required to meet requirements of a community-controlled group under the Community Empowerment Act. See the Government's [model governing documents and guidance](#).

2: Please contact us on lpp@highland.gov.uk if you need advice as to which Local Development Plans, Locality Plan(s), and National Planning Framework currently cover your Local Place Plan area.

3: See our [Information Notice template](#) for the statutory Local Place Plan consultation requirements.

4: Please contact us on lpp@highland.gov.uk if you need help identifying the Councillors and Community Councils that must be statutorily consulted as part of your Local Place Plan preparation.

5: Your Local Place Plan area may be mainly covered by one Ward; however, any Ward covering any part of a Local Place Plan area (no matter how small) must be included in its statutory consultation. In such instances, when carrying out the statutory consultation, you may wish to include wording in your Information Notice to Councillors that reflects the fact that your Local Place Plan area only goes into a small area of certain Ward/s, but that you are required to consult them nonetheless.

Planning Aid Scotland training events

Planning Aid Scotland runs a number of training events, many of which are currently free, and including some that can be of help to community bodies preparing Local Place Plans. To check what is currently available in their training programme, see [Planning Aid Scotland's Eventbrite page](#).

Other ways to inform the preparation of the Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP)

If your community is choosing not to prepare a Local Place Plan at this current time, there are other ways in which community groups can inform the preparation of the HLDP:

Consultation events – Communities can take part in consultation events regardless of whether they have a registered Local Place Plan. As and when HLDP consultation events are announced, details will be available on the [HLDP webpage](#).

- We are currently [consulting on our Play Sufficiency Assessment \(PSA\)](#) – The PSA has identified and assessed formal and informal play spaces in Highland, within Settlement Development Areas, as defined in Local Development Plans, to understand what facilities and functions different play spaces offer and where they may have limitations. Additional evaluation of accessibility and inclusivity of play spaces has also been undertaken. We have made a draft report and interactive map available and are seeking feedback by the deadline on 27 February 2026.
- Later this year we plan to hold a **Call for Ideas** for the HLDP – we will announce details in due course.

Our [Development Plans Newsletter](#) contains information on how these and other engagement activities fit with our work on the HLDP.

Other Community Land Use Plan – We have a webpage to hold [other community land use plans](#) that may be taken into account during HLDP preparation, at the discretion of the Council. If you wish to share a community land use plan for the purpose of adding it to this webpage, please email it to lpp@highland.gov.uk; noting that the community land use plan must contain no personal contact details, and the community group is responsible for obtaining permission for the use of any photos and graphics included in the Plan prior to submitting it to the Council. If your group identifies personal information that needs to be removed from PDF files we can offer assistance with redacting.

Contact us

We hope you find this update helpful. If communities in Highland have further questions relating to the legal requirements for Local Place Plans, please first visit: www.highland.gov.uk/localplaceplans and, if you cannot find the answers from the resources we have made available there, then please contact the Development Plans Team on: lpp@highland.gov.uk.